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ABSTRACT

Designed to be an in-depth reference tool, this 593-item bibliography of instructional material in the field of college reading and study skills includes items covering the years 1896 to 1987. The bibliography targets the works of three types of scholars: (1) researchers who are oriented primarily to the present as well as those whose concerns are equally with the historical roots of the profession; (2) curriculum design specialists who want to understand the legacy of tradition in college reading; and (3) graduate students who undertake research for theses or dissertations. Most of the texts included in this bibliography were written primarily for use in college reading programs or in reading/study skills units offered by learning assistance centers. Also included are trade books that serve the academic and popular press markets. (RS)

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College Reading and Learning Assistance

Technical Report No. 88-03

The Development and Validation of a Comprehensive List of Primary Sources in College Reading Instruction

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The Development and Validation of a Comprehensive List of Primary Sources in College Reading Instruction

In a recent review, Stahl (1988) observed that the field of college reading and study skills instruction suffers from a form of pariah status. And this circumstance can be traced, in part, to an ignorance of the field's rich and varied past. In a similar vein, Stahl, Hynd, and Henk (1986) sought to achieve a broader professional perspective. They proposed that college reading specialists should become cognizant of shared professional roots through chronicling, interpreting, and evaluating the fundamental ideas, the pedagogical achievements, and the research contributions of their colleagues, both past and present. Further, the writers proposed ten separate lines of inquiry for the field's consideration. Several of these suggestions for research require extensive evaluation of texts issued across the years; however, no authoritative compilation of instructional materials exists to serve as the basis for research.

The present paper is intended to address this need for an in-depth reference tool. The tool, a reference list, targets the work of three types of scholars: (a) researchers who are oriented primarily to the present as well as those whose concerns are equally with the historical roots of the profession, (b) curriculum design specialists who want to understand the legacy of tradition in college reading, and (c) graduate students who undertake research for theses or dissertations.

Description of the List

The list is comprised of 593 bibliographic entries covering the years 1896 to 1987. The dates which form the historical parameters for the reference list, while not based on specific identifiable eras, fit rather neatly into the eras proposed by Leedy (up to 1958) and into the more recent time frames mentioned elsewhere in this

report. The list does not include those religious or moralistic treatises pertaining to reading or studying that were issued before 1896 (e.g., Aquinas, translated 1947; Porter, 1870; Todd, 1835; Watts, 1721; Watts, 1741). The earliest date on this list is that of the first text published after Abell's now classic college reading investigation of 1894. The list terminates with 1987 as there have been a number of content analyses immediately preceding this date.

Most of the texts included in this list were written primarily for use in college reading programs or in reading/study skills units of learning assistance centers. However, we did include trade books that have often served in dual roles for both the academic and the popular press markets.

The list was further defined by limiting the subject matter of texts selected for inclusion. We used the text categories identified in previous content analysis research (Stahl, Simpson, & Brozo, 1988). Texts or workbooks that fell clearly into either the college study-skills category or the college reading-skills category were automatically placed on the list. Texts pertaining to speed reading that were equally concerned with comprehension instruction and study methods were also included. The same criteria was adhered to for those texts generally classified as college survival texts. Vocabulary development texts were omitted (see Stahl, Brozo, and Simpson, 1987, for an extensive listing of current vocabulary books). In addition, we eliminated most texts that might be categorized as teacher education methods texts. However, since the differentiation between a methods text and a student-oriented college reading text was blurred during the early years of the century, several texts with this dual purpose are included on the list.

Furthermore, we learned that across the years a sizable number of texts were published originally in the Commonwealth countries. Rather than overlooking these texts, we included a representative sample of these materials for their value in

comparative reading studies. These selected texts and workbooks are listed separately in a latter section of the report entitled "International Texts." Clearly, this section of the list is not comprehensive but rather serves as a sample of available texts.

Development of the List

Two mutually supportive activities were used to develop the reference list of college reading texts. The first step was the identification of potential entries. Initially, we consulted a number of secondary sources focusing on instructional materials issued for college reading programs over the past 85 years. We examined the content of selected texts and workbooks across specific historical periods: the prewar era (Laycock & Russell, 1941), the first G.I. Bill era (Ironside, 1963; Miller, 1957), the community college boom years (Bahe, 1970; Browning, 1976; Utsey, 1968), and the contemporary period (Brozo & Johns, 1986; Heinrichs & LaBranche, 1986; Radencich & Schumm, 1984; Stahl, Brozo, & Simpson, 1987). In addition to analyzing content, each of these reports contains reference lists of texts issued during the respective eras. In all, we identified 335 probable sources via the review of these studies. The titles that met the selection criteria for this project were placed on a preliminary reference list.

The next set of secondary sources leading to the identification of instructional texts consisted of historical sources on college reading instruction. In this task we perused historical chronicles of the overall field (e.g., Leedy, 1958) and historical analyses of instructional methods (e.g., Stahl, 1983). Thus we identified specific instructional texts thought to be of importance by the historians and the chroniclers of the field. We also carefully reviewed historically important texts that provide the field with an understanding of the various trends in pedagogical thought, research, and instructional design over the years. Here we are referring to both methods

texts (e.g., Ahrendt, 1975; Leedy, 1964; Maxwell, 1979; Triggs, 1943) and instructional texts containing reference lists at either the chapter level or text level (e.g., Bird, 1938; Kornhauser, 1924; Robinson, 1946). Finally, we compared our preliminary list with several similar but far less extensive secondary sources by earlier authors (Bliesmer, 1957; Narang, 1973). Such comparisons provided additional sources to be included in our list. At this stage the list was comprised of 452 entries.

Internal verification was the next step in preparing the reference list. Here we needed to evaluate each entry to guarantee that the text was germane to content covered in postsecondary reading programs. First, whenever possible, we reviewed texts that were in our personal libraries, the libraries of our respective institutions, or available from interlibrary loan.

Next we asked a panel of experts to check the list for accuracy, to provide additional sources that may have been overlooked, and to validate the inclusion of texts that we were unable to obtain and review through the previously mentioned methods. The panel was representative of the profession as we selected members from various sections of the nation and various stages in their professional careers (i.e., ranging from initial entry to retirement).

Once we felt that we had formulated a highly comprehensive list (although we do not presume that it is exhaustive), we continued the validation procedures at the level of each of the 470 entries. We were now concerned with an entry's depth: the number of editions a text might have gone through during its publication history.

To validate the accuracy of each entry, we looked up each text or workbook in the references that provide bibliographic information on publications held by the Library of Congress. For texts issued before 1956, we searched the National Union Catalog Pre-1956 Imprints, which contains copies of actual author cards found in

library card catalogues. These entries provided standard bibliographic data, such as author, publication date, complete title, edition number, city of publication, and publisher. For texts issued since 1956, we searched various editions of Library of Congress Catalog Books: Subjects spanning the years from 1950 to 1987. For this validation procedure, we searched both the "Reading" category and the "Methods of Study" category, along with the numerous subcategories within each main category. Finally, we searched Books in Print: Subjects and the Cumulative Books Index (Books in English) to verify listings of more current texts.

As necessary, we searched The National Union Catalog Author List, which contains listings of texts by authors' names. Here again we were able to verify bibliographic data. The verification activities, while time consuming, were required as we utilized secondary sources along with primary sources in the development of the list.

While this overall process was one of verification, we did find more than 100 titles that appeared to be likely additions to the list. These sources were subjected to the procedures previously described in this paper, and those texts found to be germane to the list were then added.

Uses of the List

We believe that the list will be a valuable tool for individuals undertaking any of a number of research endeavors or curriculum projects. With the help of this comprehensive secondary source, researchers can locate hundreds of primary sources. Here are several potential uses of the list.

First, researchers developing historical analyses of particular eras of college reading instruction or conducting content analyses can use the list to determine the texts that were in print during the era of interest. Furthermore, by using information drawn from the list, a researcher might observe trends in publication

suggesting delimitations for historical eras or confirming the existence of eras postulated previously from the study of program descriptions, national and regional surveys, applied research, and even basic research with college students (e.g., eye movement studies). The list's breadth permits the writer not only to identify texts of broad national impact issued by the large publishing houses but also to locate the often overlooked texts issued in lesser numbers by small presses and academic presses.

Second, the list will help researchers to conduct both theoretically driven and research driven cross-generational content analyses (Stahl, Simpson, & Brozo, 1988). Through such research, one can determine whether there has been an interaction between basic research, applied research, and instructional methodology. In other words, are research findings eventually translated into instructional methods found within texts, or are the texts slaves to tradition? The list permits the researcher to examine both the breadth of publications for an era or across several periods. In addition, it gives writers an opportunity to focus in-depth on the content of specific texts through several editions or on the multiple texts written by one author.

Third, the list can be used as an aid for the in-depth review of literature that should accompany research reports (particularly technical reports that have yet to be boiled down to research articles) and the literature review section of a thesis or a dissertation. Such literature reviews are generally creditable in their discussion of the research bases of a topic. On the other hand, researchers often fail to cover adequately the methods of instruction, short of the most current and in some cases trendy strategies. Yet, some form of virtually all of the more popular reading and studying strategies (multistep textbook-study systems, split-page notetaking schemes, mapping techniques, outlining procedures) generally surfaced in the instructional texts before individuals saw any of them as fruitful avenues for

research (often in the form of the doctoral dissertation). In fact, one may theorize that instructional innovation in the field of college reading appears to drive research as much or to a greater degree than research drives instruction.

Hence, careful review of the texts listed in this extensive compilation would promote accurate accounts of the interaction between the convergent world of the researcher and the divergent world of the curriculum innovator. Further, careful review of texts issued in the past could lessen the proclivity toward "reinventing the wheel" and promote "giving credit where credit is due."

In closing, it must be noted that this list of primary sources of instruction for college reading programs is not all inclusive. Indeed, someone may find that one of his or her "hidden treasures" was omitted or that a particular edition of an included text was not listed. Nevertheless, the list, as it now stands, is the most extensive reference of its nature yet compiled. It should prove to be a useful secondary source for researchers and practitioners alike.

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Master List
College Reading and Learning Assistance Technical Reports

Technical Report No.	
84-01	Brozo, W.B., Schmelzer, R.V., & Spires, N.A. A Study of Test Wiseness Clues in College/University Teacher-Made Tests with Implications for Academic Assistance Centers. (ERIC No. ED 240-928)
84-02	Stahl, N.A., Brozo, W.G., & Henk, W.A. Evaluative Criteria for College Reading-Study Research. (ERIC No. ED 240-933)
84-03	Schmelzer, R.V., Brozo, W.G., & Stahl, N.A. Using a Learning Model to Integrate Study Skills into a Peer-Tutoring Program. (ERIC No. ED 256-244)
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84-09	Henk, W.A., Stahl, N.A., & King, J.R. The Readability of State Drivers' Manual. (Not submitted to ERIC--please refer to Transportation Quarterly, 38(4), 507-520).
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